

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7120

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 09932

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEAN, E

SUBJECT: ASEAN ECONOMIC MINISTERS FIND U.S. MEMORANDA

"QUITE NEGATIVE"

1. SUMMARY. ASEAN ECONOMIC MINISTERS DISCUSSED THE ELEVEN U.S. MEMORANDA AT THEIR JAKARTA MEETING AND FOUND THEM "QUITE NEGATIVE." THEY SEEM TO APPROACH THE FORTHCOMING US/ASEAN MINISTERIAL WITH SKEPTICISM ABOUT ITS PROBABLE RESULTS. END SUMMARY.

2. DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRADE VICENTE VALDEPENAS WHO WAS A MEMBER OF THE GOP DELEGATION TO THE JUNE 5-6 MEETING OF ASEAN ECONOMIC MINISTERS SOUGHT OUT EMBOFFS TO INFORM US "UNOFFICIALLY FOR OUR BACKGROUND AND INFORMATION" THAT THE ECONOMIC MINISTERS FOUND THE ELEVEN U.S. MEMORANDA "QUITE NEGATIVE." VALDEPENAS DID SO WITH THE CONCURRENCE OF MRS. MANALO TO WHOM HE HAD GIVEN A TELEPHONIC REPORT FROM JAKARTA.

3. MALAYSIA (DPM MAHATHIR) AND SINGAPORE (HON SUI SEN) WERE STRONGEST IN THEIR CRITICISM OF THE U.S. RESPONSES, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND CONTRASTED THEM WITH THE MORE FORTHCOMING ATTITUDES OF JAPAN AND THE EC. DR. SOEHARDI OF INDONESIA WENT SO FAR AS TO LIST "THE JAPANESE GOODIES." VALDEPENAS SAID THAT, SINCE THE PHILIPPINES WAS THE COORDINATOR FOR THE US/ASEAN DIALOGUE, HE FELT CONSTRAINED TO DEFEND THE UNITED STATES AND POINTED OUT THAT ASEAN SHOULD NOT EXPECT MUCH FROM THE FIRST MEETING SINCE THE UNITED STATES WAS

THE LAST COUNTRY TO ENTER INTO A DIALOGUE WITH ASEAN.

4. VALDEPENAS ATTRIBUTED MAHATHIR'S STAND PARTLY TO THE MALAYSIAN EXPERIENCE AS CONTACT POINT FOR THE AUSTRALIAN DIALOGUE, WHICH REMAINS LESS THAN SATISFACTORY FROM THE ASEAN POINT OF VIEW. HE THEN ADDED WITH A LAUGH THAT "WE ARE NOT GETTING ANYWHERE EITHER WITH CANADA" FOR WHICH THE PHILIPPINES IS ALSO THE CONTACT POINT.

5. ASEAN DELEGATIONS TO THE US/ASEAN MINISTERIAL, ACCORDING TO VALDEPENAS, WILL LIKELY BE HEADED BY MAHATHIR (MALAYSIA), HON SUI SEN (SINGAPORE), WIDJOJO AND PRAWIRO (INDONESIA), AND THE NEW THAI MINISTER OF INDUSTRY WHO WILL LIKELY BE CHOSEN BECAUSE OF HIS COMMAND OF ENGLISH. AS FOR THE PHILIPPINES, "WE ALL HOPE TO GO."

6. FINALLY, VALDEPENAS CONFIDED THAT THE ECONOMIC MINISTERS IN JAKARTA DECIDED THAT THEY OUGHT TO HOLD A POST MORTEM IN WASHINGTON AFTER THE AUGUST 3-4 MINISTERIAL AND WOULD PREFER TO OMIT THE ACTIVITIES SUGGESTED IN OUR ILLUSTRATIVE SCHEDULE FOR OTHER CITIES IN THE UNITED STATES. SOME OF THE MINISTERS WILL SEEK INDIVIDUAL APPOINTMENTS WITH USG OFFICIALS WHOM THEY KNOW. WITH RESPECT TO THE POST MORTEM VALDEPENAS SUGGESTED THAT THE DEPARTMENT OUGHT TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE ASEAN WASHINGTON COMMITTEE. MURPHY
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